Issue **Recovery Month Proclamations**

"I hope that my will to live and stay mentally well inspires people to change their lives for the better."

Kevin Hines Speaker and Author Walnut Creek, CA

Engagement Accomplishments Respect

Community

Triumph

join the voices for recovery

on pathways to wellness



ISSUE RECOVERY MONTH PROCLAMATIONS

A proclamation is an official announcement that publicly recognizes an initiative such as **National Recovery Month** (**Recovery Month**). Proclamations are typically signed and issued by federal officials, governors, state legislators, or other government officials at the local level. Issue a proclamation designating September as **Recovery Month** on behalf of a state, territory, city, or county to raise awareness for **Recovery Month**, bring attention to mental and/ or substance use disorders, and spread the message that behavioral health is essential to overall health, prevention works, treatment is effective, and people recover.

In 2012, 106 proclamations were signed to support **Recovery Month**, including one issued by President Barack Obama. For the past 12 years, the Executive Office of the President of the United States has supported the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) (http://www.samhsa.gov), within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) (http://www.hhs.gov), by working to raise public awareness and support for those with behavioral health conditions, as well as their communities and families. The Presidential Proclamation recognizes the importance of prevention, treatment, and recovery across the country. Equally as important are the hundreds of proclamations issued at the state, territory, and local levels each year, which is where your support is needed.

Create a proclamation that highlights this year's **Recovery Month** theme to differentiate your proclamation from previous years. Refer to the information below for other tips to help draft and promote a proclamation.

Contact Public Officials...

Before you write a proclamation to designate September as **Recovery Month** in your area, research local officials to gauge their interests and beliefs about prevention, treatment, and recovery support services. You will want to engage someone who is passionate about this issue, if possible. Remember that many public officials can issue a proclamation, including:

- Governors
- Mayors
- City council members
- State legislators
- County managers
- Tribal nation leaders

Since some legislatures are not in session during the summer months, contact public officials at least three months in advance of *Recovery Month*. Write a letter or send an email to initiate correspondence with an official's communications office, and follow up with a phone call. During the initial conversation, explain the *Recovery Month* observance, detail scheduled local activities, and discuss the importance of their support for this annual event. If the official's office is unfamiliar with the proclamation process, explain that it's a simple way for the government to recognize the importance of prevention of, treatment for, and recovery from mental and/or substance use disorders – and that it can encourage those in need to seek help.



Once the office confirms that the official might support **Recovery Month** and issue a proclamation, it's time to start writing.

Decide on a Style...

There are two styles of proclamation writing: traditional and modern. While these two styles differ in format, they can both generate awareness of **Recovery Month.**

- **Traditional proclamations** begin with a series of statements starting with the words "whereas," which detail the current state of affairs and suggest the reasoning behind the proclamation. Each clause notes the problems or issues being addressed and is followed by a concluding phrase beginning with "therefore," which specifically requests the support or action needed.
- Modern proclamations are written in a letter format, for instance, the 2012 Presidential Proclamation
 (http://www.recoverymonth.gov/~/media/Images/Proclamations/2010/PresidentBarackObama.ashx).
 They highlight the same points as a traditional proclamation, but are written as statements.

Samples of both formats are included at the end of this document. Examples of signed and issued proclamations can be viewed on the **Recovery Month** website at **http://www.recoverymonth.gov** under the "Proclamations" section.

Develop a Proclamation...

Once you are familiar with the different proclamation styles, use the following checklist when drafting a proclamation and working to gain public support for **Recovery Month.**

- Determine the official's preferred writing style (traditional or modern).
- Offer to draft the proclamation.
- Refer to the examples at the end of this document to help draft the proclamation.
- Insert local information or statistics that will resonate with community members (see examples in the "Fast Facts" document in this toolkit).
- Submit the proclamation to the official's office early and allow time for the official to review and sign the proclamation.
- Follow up frequently to check the status of the proclamation.
- Once it has been signed, display copies of the proclamation in public places.
- Post the proclamation on the **Recovery Month** website, Facebook page (http://www.facebook.com/ RecoveryMonth), and Twitter account (http://twitter.com/recoverymonth).



Personalize:

You can personalize your proclamation for your community and include important messages about recovery. Consider including or consulting the following resources about treatment and recovery services:

- Single-State Agency (SSA) Directory
- SAMHSA's National Survey on Drug Use and Health (http://www.samhsa.gov/data/NSDUH.aspx)
- SAMHSA's Recovery Statement (http://blog.samhsa.gov/2012/03/23/defintion-of-recovery-updated/)
- SAMHSA's National Survey of Substance Abuse Treatment Services (N-SSATS) (http://wwwdasis.samhsa.gov/dasis2/nssats.htm)
- SAMHSA's Drug Abuse Warning Network (http://www.samhsa.gov/data/DAWN.aspx)
- SAMHSA's Treatment Episode Data Set (http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/DASIS.htm)

Publicize...

Publicize the proclamation to bring further attention to **Recovery Month** and generate momentum for the national observance in your community. Visit local businesses, health clubs, libraries, hotel lobbies, schools, college campuses, treatment and recovery centers, community mental health centers, and/or government buildings to see if they allow you to display copies of proclamations. If permitted, display a **Recovery Month** poster to garner additional attention and increase interest.

Arrange a press conference or "town-hall" meeting and have local officials sign or present the proclamation there as an additional publicity option. The event can be accompanied by a roundtable discussion on issues related to mental and/or substance use disorders. Ideas for panelists include treatment and service providers, families affected by mental or substance use disorders, young adults affected by these disorders, and other individuals already in recovery. For information on how to plan a **Recovery Month** event such as this, refer to the "Promote **Recovery Month** with Events" document in this toolkit.

Lastly, arrange for a proclamation to be featured in a local publication to increase awareness. Distribute electronic copies of the document to the "local" or "metro" desks of local newspapers, along with a press release to announce the signing of the **Recovery Month** proclamation. For tips on how to write an effective press release, refer to the "Press Materials for Your **Recovery Month** Event" document in this toolkit.



Share...

Post a copy of the proclamation on the **Recovery Month** website (http://www.recoverymonth.gov) and send it electronically to recoverymonth@samhsa.hhs.gov or in hard copy to:

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration ATTN: Consumer Affairs/**Recovery Month** Center for Substance Abuse Treatment 1 Choke Cherry Road, Seventh Floor Rockville, MD 20857

Consult Resources...

For more information on **Recovery Month** and services available to people in need, please refer to the following resources:

- SAMHSA's National Helpline, 1-800-662-HELP (4357) or 1-800-487-4889 (TDD) (http://www.samhsa.gov/treatment): Provides 24-hour, free, and confidential treatment referral and information about mental and/or substance use disorders, prevention, treatment, and recovery in English and Spanish.
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-TALK (8255) (http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org): Provides a free, 24-hour helpline available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress.
- SAMHSA's "Find Substance Abuse and Mental Health Treatment" Website (http://www.samhsa.gov/treatment): Contains information about treatment options and special services located in your area.
- The Recovery Month website (http://www.recoverymonth.gov): Contains all the materials from this toolkit and a wide variety of relevant resources.
- **Technical Assistance Centers:** Maximizes self-determination and recovery and assists people on their path to recovery, ultimately decreasing their dependence on expensive social services and avoiding hospitalization. The five technical assistance centers include:
 - National Consumer Supporter Technical Assistance Center at Mental Health America (http://www.ncstac.org);
 - National Empowerment Center (http://www.power2u.org);
 - National Mental Health Consumers' Self-Help Clearinghouse (http://www.mhselfhelp.org);
 - The Family Café (http://familycafe.net); and
 - The STAR Center (http://www.consumerstar.org/index.html).
- **BHBusiness (http://www.saasnet.org/bhb):** Offers targeted training and support for behavioral health care executives, CEOs, and directors, including health care insurance enrollment training information.



- Center for Financing Reform and Innovation (http://www.samhsa.gov/healthreform): Supports the need for information, analysis, products, and technical assistance to address significant changes in the organization and financing of behavioral health care, as well as the need to guide and support governments and people on how to most effectively and efficiently use available resources to meet the prevention, treatment, and recovery support needs of the public.
- Healthcare.gov (http://www.healthcare.gov/index.html): Contains information on finding health insurance
 options, help using insurance, information on the Affordable Care Act, help comparing providers, and
 information on prevention and wellness resources.
- SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) (http://www.prainc.com/soar/about/default.asp): Increases access to Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Income for eligible adults who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and have a mental and/or substance use disorder.

Inclusion of websites and resources in this document and on the *Recovery Month* website does not constitute official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services or the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.



Sample Proclamation 1: Traditional Format

WHEREAS, behavioral health is an essential part of health and one's overall wellness; and

WHEREAS, prevention of mental and/or substance use disorders works, treatment is effective, and people recover in our area and around the nation; and

WHEREAS, preventing and overcoming mental and/or substance use disorders is essential to achieving healthy lifestyles, both physically and emotionally; and

WHEREAS, we must encourage relatives and friends of people with mental and/or substance use disorders to implement preventive measures, recognize the signs of a problem, and guide those in need to appropriate treatment and recovery support services; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, 3.8 million people received specialty treatment for a substance use disorder and more than 31.6 million adults aged 18 or older received services for mental disorders, according to the 2011 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Given the serious nature of this public health problem, we must continue to reach the millions more who need help; and

WHEREAS, on October 1, 2013 as a result of the Affordable Care Act, more than 11 million uninsured individuals with behavioral health needs will become eligible for affordable insurance coverage for their treatment needs, according to the 2011 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. We must ensure that all of these individuals are successfully enrolled into coverage; and

WHEREAS, to help more people achieve and sustain long-term recovery, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), and [Name of State, City, County or Treatment Organization] invite all residents of [State/City/Town] to participate in National Recovery Month (Recovery Month); and

NOW, THEREFORE, I [Name and Title of Your Elected Official], by virtue of the authority vested in me by the laws of **[City, State, or Locality],** do hereby proclaim the month of September 2013 as

National Recovery Month

In [City or State] and call upon the people of [City or State] to observe this month with appropriate programs, activities, and ceremonies to support this year's *Recovery Month*.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this **[Day of Month]** day of **[Month],** in the year of our Lord two thousand thirteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two-hundred and thirty-eighth.

Signature

[Insert City/State or Other Official Seal]



Sample Proclamation 2: Modern Format

Mental and substance use disorders affect all communities nationwide, but with commitment and support, people with these disorders can achieve healthy lifestyles and lead rewarding lives in recovery. In 2011, 3.8 million people aged 12 or older received specialty treatment for an illicit drug or alcohol use problem in the past year, and more than 31.6 million adults aged 18 or older received mental health services in the past year. By seeking help, people who experience mental and/or substance use disorders can embark on a new path toward improved health and overall wellness.

The focus of **National Recovery Month** (**Recovery Month**) this September is to celebrate their journey. **Recovery Month** spreads the message that behavioral health is an essential part of health and one's overall wellness, and that prevention works, treatment is effective, and people recover.

This is a message we need to spread far and wide. The impact of mental and substance use disorders is apparent in our local community, and an estimated XX [Thousand/Million] people in [City or State] are affected by these conditions. According to the 2011 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, in 2011, 21.6 million people aged 12 or older nationwide needed treatment for an illicit drug or alcohol use problem (8.4 percent of people aged 12 or older). Of these, 2.3 million (0.9 percent of people aged 12 or older and 10.8 percent of those who needed treatment) received treatment at a specialty facility. Also in 2011, out of the 45.6 million Americans aged 18 or older who had any mental illness in the past year, only 31.6 million received mental health services in the past year. Through **Recovery Month**, people become more aware and able to recognize the signs of mental and/or substance use disorders, which can lead more people into needed treatment. Managing the effects of these conditions can help people achieve healthy lifestyles, both physically and emotionally.

For 24 years, **Recovery Month** has worked to improve the lives of those affected by mental and/or substance use disorders by raising awareness of these diseases and educating communities about the prevention, treatment, and recovery resources that are available. For the above reasons, I am asking the citizens of **[City or State]** to join me in celebrating this September as **National Recovery Month**.

I, [Name and Title of Elected Official], do hereby proclaim the month of September 2013 as

National Recovery Month

In [City or State] and call upon our community to observe this month with compelling programs and events that support this year's observance.

	Signature

[Insert City/State or Other Official Seal]